

REMARKS

Claims 12-35 are pending in this application. Claims 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 29, 31 and 33 have been amended to more particular claim the subject matter of the present invention. Claims 18, 24 and 30 have been deleted without prejudice. Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced into the application by these amendments.

Claims 12-35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,638,035 to Romerein et al. (hereinafter "Romerein"). Applicants respectfully disagree.

With respect to claim 12, claim 12 as presently amended recites a housing frame securing signal I/O ports; and two housing covers which are interchangeably installed on either side of the housing frame and one of the two covers includes a directional processor, whereby the direction of the directional processor is reversed by switching the two covers on the housing frame.

Romerein discloses a coaxial cable distribution network having a reversible directional coupler. The signal distribution network of Romerein comprises a motherboard and a daughter board. The daughter board includes directional circuitry. Reversal of the direction of the RF signal is obtained by reversing the daughter board on the motherboard. Romerein discloses as follows:

Daughter board probes DB1 to DB7 are mounted on the motherboard and will act to mechanically mount the daughter board thereon and to electrically respectively connect to daughter board sockets DS1-DS7.

(If the daughter board is reversed relative to the motherboard because of a reversal of RF signal path then probes DB1-DB7 will be respectively connected to daughter board sockets DS7-DS1.) (See column 10 lines 30-41).

Thus the RF circuit over the motherboard is from CP terminal 38C ... to daughter board probe DB1. From DB1 to DB7 the RF circuit may go through the directional coupler on the daughter board to DB7 or may go to DB7 through the bypass BP. ... The RF signal may go across the motherboard in the opposite direction in which case the daughter board connections are reversed ... (See column 10 line 63 - column 11 line 5, emphasis added).

Hence if the RF signal were toward rather than away from the CP terminal the daughter board must be reversed relative to the motherboard. (See column 11 lines 64-67).

In accordance with Romerein, the reversal of RF signal direction is obtained by reversing the daughterboard relative to the motherboard. This is a much more cumbersome method for reversing signal direction, since it requires a technician in the field to handle the circuitry; thereby potentially exposing the circuitry to damage.

In contrast, with the present invention, a technician in the field need merely to switch the housing covers, without having to specifically manipulate certain individual electronic components. Incorporation of the reversible component onto one of the covers is a key advantage of the present invention.

Romerein fails to disclose a directional tap comprising a housing frame and two opposing covers, one of the covers including a directional circuitry such that

reversal of the RF signal direction is obtained by switching the covers. Therefore, claim 12 is clearly distinguishable from Romerein.

With respect to claims 17-18, the Examiner asserts that Romerein discloses a front and rear cover members. Applicants agree. However, Romerein fails to disclose a scheme of incorporating directional circuitry in one of the symmetric covers and obtaining the reversal of RF signal direction by switching the two covers. Romerein specifically states at column 3, lines 65-67 “[w]hen the coupler circuit is removed, the RF through path bypasses the coupler main feed input and output terminals”. As such, for Romerein, 1) a circuit must be manipulated; and 2) the circuit must be removed. This, again is different than the present invention which merely involves switching two frame covers in order to reverse the directional coupler. Therefore, the present invention is not anticipated by Romerein.

With respect to claims 19, 25 and 31, these claims also include limitations that are similar to the aforementioned limitations of claim 12, (i.e., a housing frame and two housing covers which can be installed on either side of the housing so that the direction of the directional coupler can be reversed by switching the covers). Therefore, claims 19, 25 and 31 are also allowable for the same reason stated above.

With respect to the remaining claims, these claims are dependent on claims 12, 19, 25 and 31. Therefore, these claims are also allowable for the same reasons stated above.

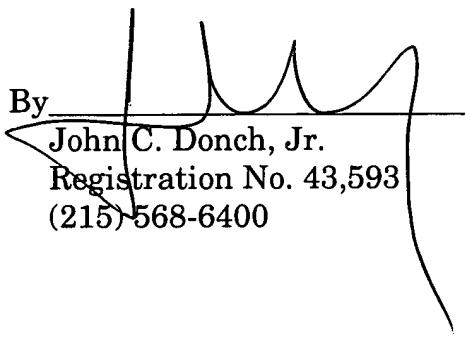
Applicant: Gresko et al.
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For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the presently claimed invention is allowable. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Gresko et al.

By


John C. Donch, Jr.
Registration No. 43,593
(215) 568-6400

Volpe and Koenig, P.C.
United Plaza, Suite 1600
30 South 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

JCD/kag